



ALL ABILITIES CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

CENSUS 2021 - Submission

June 2018

The Mornington Peninsula Shire has an established representative All Abilities Consultative Committee that aims to promote and advocate for improved access and equity to both Council and the wider community, irrespective of age, type of disability, gender, or cultural background and to consult/collaborate with the Shire on related matters. The Committee's core function is to advise on issues relating to access and inclusion for people with disabilities, and families and carers of people with disability, residing in or visiting the Mornington Peninsula.

This submission was compiled by members of the AACC with support from Mornington Peninsula Shire staff. The submission does not provide comment on all sections of the current Census survey, rather a focus on specific sections that could be improved to ensure relevant and necessary data collection relating to people with a disability and their carers and families.

1. Income and Work

There is a need to consider asking if the person is underemployed, or if they face any barriers to employment. To ensure clarity from unpaid work, it is suggested that this section be titled Income and Paid Work. There is a need to gather information on disposable income following mortgage/rent payments, utilities/bills payments etc. That is, ask about essential and non-essential expenditure.

There is a need to clarify whether people who define their work as contract work are working for an employer or not.

2. Unpaid work and care

Include a follow-up question that asks about their relationship to that child. This will allow for data on grandparents, foster carers, relatives etc that are caring for a child.

Ask this question for all household members to allow for data on young people doing unpaid domestic work (e.g. – young carers).

3. Education and training

It is recommended that the following questions are considered for the 2021 Census:

- *What type of educational institution is the person attending?* – add specialist education to ascertain the level of segregation experience by those with disabilities in an educational setting.
- *What is the highest level qualification the person has obtained?* If a person is able to identify as having a disability, then this question combined with employment questions, will enable an accurate comparison to the rest of the population.

4. Disability and Carers

Improvements are required for identifying Australians living with disability. In the 2016 Census, disability was measured only in terms of whether a person requires 'help' or 'someone to be with them'. This does not adequately allow a person to identify as having a disability. Disability pride plays an important role in destigmatising disability within the community. It is important to note that not all people with disabilities require assistance with self-care activities, body movement or communication. The current questions establish disability from a medical model perspective, and do nothing to identify the barriers people with a disability face in accessing full participation in ordinary life. The ratification of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD) by the Australia Government in 2008 means that Australia must demonstrate that opportunities for disabled people do not differ from the rest of society, that rights under the CPRD are upheld and their dignity respected in all aspects of life.

Further to this, there is a need to consider consistency of language. The use of the words 'profound and severe' is not used in all current demographic data. There also needs to be consideration for chronic health issues (e.g. – diabetes) that do not require significant assistance. The language could be changed to "significant assistance" instead of just "assistance".

It is important to identify gaps between those with disability or the ageing population who requires assistance but do not qualify for NDIS or Home Care Packages. Consider expanding and reframing of the current questions as they are somewhat paternalistic/patronising. It is recommended that the language is changed from 'help' and 'someone to be with them' and replaced with 'require support/assistance with'. There are other surveys which attempt to capture such data, namely the Supplementary Disability Survey and the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers. However, both surveys are sample data collection and only relate to state level.

Further recommended considerations:

- Identify barriers by location and disability type to provide essential data for good planning of infrastructure and services at a local level.

- Ensure a clear differentiation is made between permanent and temporary disability, and at the beginning.
- Need to expand the definition of assistance with communication so that all disabilities are considered.
- Consider asking if the disability is mobility based, sensory, or communication (could tick multiple).
- Ensure definitions align with language used in relevant Commonwealth and State Plans.
- Consider including a question on whether the disability impacts on the person's ability to be involved in the community in any way.

5. Housing

In the National Disability Strategy (NDS), the government recognises that as the population ages, disability will increase and that universal design will become even more important. The NDS set an aspirational target that all new homes will be of agreed universal design standards by 2020. The 2021 Census is a great opportunity to assess what percentage of all new housing has reached the agreed universal design standards.

It is important to note that many people with disabilities are living in unsuitable housing and the 2016 Census did not provide the opportunity to capture such data. There is no capacity for a young person living in a nursing home to be identified and captured in the Census.

6. Transport

There is a need to address the significant role that transport plays connecting all members of communities. People with disabilities face many barriers to transport and further transport questions could identify areas to improve transport for all in the community. Further inclusion of a question such as, "if using your normal mode of transport, were you able to get to your destination on time?" is recommended to highlight transport difficulties. It is also recommended that the survey asks if the person can use public transport independently.

The current questions have a strong focus on commuting to work but do not consider transport to activity centres, recreation/leisure facilities, educational institution etc. There is also a need to consider use of other modes of transport (e.g. – public transport, walking, cycling, ride share, community transport).

Inclusion of a question related to proximity of public transport options to the household. Could make considerations for the '20 minute neighbourhood' concept (i.e. – can an individual reach public transport within a 20 minute walk?)

7. Other topics

It is recommended that questions from the Victorian Population Health Survey are used to allow for a national comparison. Topics to consider:

- Mental Health / Access to psychological health services

- Gender equality attitudes
- Alcohol and gambling related harm
- Access to health and social services